

Direction



FY 2017-2020
Annual Strategic Plan



The Director's Message

This plan, as set forth in statute, outlines the Idaho Fish and Game Commission's expectations and Fish and Game's overall agency direction for the next four years: FY2017-2020.

When I became director five years ago, I said doubling down on deer and elk management would be a top priority and my direction, with support of the Fish and Game Commission, continues to be strategic implementation of our elk and deer management plans.

Our management efforts, coupled with help from Mother Nature resulted last fall in one of the most successful seasons for Idaho big game hunters in recent memory.

Last fall's elk and mule deer harvest was the best in Idaho in over two decades and the whitetail harvest set a new all-time record high.

While our active predation and habitat management efforts are helping us improve our elk and deer herds, these efforts must be sustained to address continuing predation impacts in some of our core elk hunting areas.

Building and maintaining our big game herds is good for hunting and the Idaho economy, but it also leads to increased wildlife damage on private lands. We are working hard to mitigate damage by providing increased resources and working with landowners to fence stack yards and take other measures to minimize wildlife-related damage but we still have more work to do.

Our work to keep state species off the Endangered Species Act list continues to increase. We are optimistic the Yellowstone grizzly bear population delisting rule will soon be finalized, removing them from the ESA list and put under state management. We have collaborated with our neighboring states of Wyoming and Montana to develop the necessary framework for coordinated management to sustain a recovered grizzly bear population in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

On another ESA front, the five year post-delisting monitoring period for wolves expired in May meaning wolves remain under state management without further federal reporting requirements. Our continuing commitment to responsibly manage wolves will ensure management stays under state authority. Further, our recently completed State Wildlife Action Plan, currently in review, prioritizes conservation management plans for other Idaho species to avoid federal listing.

As Idaho's wildlife management agency, we've had a lot on our plate this past fiscal year with more to come. Thanks to strong deer and elk populations, more hunters are taking to the field resulting in higher license revenue. This helped us recoup some of the funding lost during the recession allowing us to request an enhancement in FY17 license-funded wildlife management activities for the first time in seven years benefiting important programs. However, we have not made up for inflationary losses in key programs such as rearing and stocking fish, enforcement and wildlife monitoring.

Idaho Fish and Game needs stable consistent funding in order to meet the many challenges we face including management plan implementation for keeping various species off the Endangered Species Act list while providing excellent hunting and fishing opportunities for the citizens of our state, even in years when nature doesn't cooperate.

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission and Department are proud of the work we do for the people of Idaho. It is the hunters, anglers and trappers of our state who were the original wildlife conservationists and that legacy lives on today. We always strive to manage all of Idaho's wildlife while meeting our legal mandate to "preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage for continued supplies for hunting, fishing and trapping."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Virgil Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "V" and "M".

Virgil Moore
Director

Idaho Fish and Game Commission

The Idaho State Legislature created the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 1899. In 1938, by voter initiative, the Fish and Game Commission was created to set policy for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in its role to implement the State of Idaho wildlife policy. Commissioners are appointed from seven administrative regions by the governor and serve staggered, four-year terms. Selection of new Commissioners for the Clearwater and Upper Snake regions are in progress at the time of report submission.

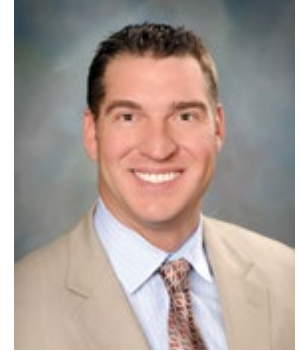
The FY 2017 Commissioners are as follows: Brad Corkill (Panhandle), Daniel Blanco (Clearwater), Blake Fischer (Southwest), Mark Doerr (Magic Valley), Lane Clezie (Southeast), Derick Attebury (Upper Snake), and Will Naillon (Salmon). The Commission holds most of the regulatory authority for fish and wildlife management, and expresses its overall expectations to the Fish and Game in the 2015 Strategic Plan.



Will Naillon
Chairman



Brad Corkill
Vice-chairman



Blake Fischer

OUR VISION

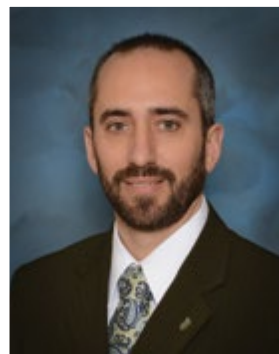
The Idaho Department of Fish and Game shall work with hunters, anglers, trappers and other Idahoans to provide abundant fish and wildlife that enables their right to hunt, fish and trap, and provides the foundation for the rich wildlife heritage they value, which is enshrined in the Fish and Game mission.



Lane Clezie



Daniel Blanco



Derick Attebury



Mark Doerr

The Landscape 2017: Key External Factors

The Economy — The Great Recession significantly affected Fish and Game's license revenue starting in 2009, with a bottoming out in 2012. License revenue continues to trend upward, and has seen marked improvement starting in 2014 with 2015's total revenue surpassing the previous peak experienced in 2008. After aligning license budget to license revenue as requested by the legislature, Fish and Game successfully restored license budget to key programs for 2017 due to improved revenue. While revenue growth continues at a slower rate in 2016, maintaining this trend is largely dependent on factors outside of the department's control, such as wildfires, weather, and stream flows. To help mitigate these variables, Fish and Game continues its marketing efforts and strategic use of the Commission's discount authority.

Energy Development — Idaho has the natural potential for wind, geothermal, hydro, and solar power. Potential effects to fish, wildlife, and habitat must be assessed and considered as in-state and out-of-state energy demands are addressed. The effects of landscape-scale energy infrastructure on sage-grouse will remain an emphasis of Fish and Game evaluation in the coming years.

Weather, Water, and Wildfire — Extreme weather conditions can create conditions that can affect local populations of wildlife. For example, a dry summer with low food availability for mule deer can cause low winter survival, and a severe winter also can decimate local mule deer populations. Spring conditions influence fuel loads which in turn affect the frequency and intensity of wildfires—which is a primary threat to sage-grouse. Wildfire not only impacts wildlife habitat, but also can close areas to hunting and hunters in the fall which in turn affects participation and agency revenue. Likewise, precipitation levels and timing significantly influence fisheries and therefore angler participation and license revenue.

Technology — Rapid changes in technology continually change the way people can receive—and expect—communications, products, and services to be delivered. Staff time must be reallocated, training and specialized expertise is required, and technology must stay up-to-

date. These continual challenges require funding that traditionally has not been allocated to communications.

Climate Change — Empirical assessments are just beginning for predictive modeling of spatial and temporal effects of climate change on fish, wildlife, and habitat in Idaho and the surrounding states and provinces. Field staff and program managers are challenged with using emerging climate information to adapt their on-the-ground management to create resiliency in the face of uncertainty.

Sage-Grouse — Fish and Game provided technical assistance to the Governor's Office, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, and Natural Resources Conservation Service on their management plans for sage-grouse conservation. Fish and Game also provided technical and financial assistance and fire rehabilitation for sage-grouse conservation projects on state, private, and federal lands. Fish and Game coordinates annual lek surveys and manages sage-grouse population data.

Invasive Species — Exotic and invasive plants and animals may alter or convert fish and wildlife habitat and compete, hybridize, or prey on native and other desirable fish and wildlife. Significant resources are required to respond to a rapidly growing list of invasive species and to fund interdiction. Fish and Game plays a key support role in prevention, detection and control activities for both aquatic and terrestrial invasive species.

Nature Deficit Disorder — The average child spends 44 hours per week plugged into electronic media and a mere 30 minutes outside in unstructured play. This disconnection not only has been linked to childhood obesity, attention deficit disorders, and developmental problems, but also will affect the future of wildlife stewardship. We continue to collaborate with many organizations to educate teachers, families, and children coupled with outdoor experiences, including fishing and hunting.

The Landscape 2017: Strategic Issues

Wolf Management — Wolf management remains a critical focus as Fish and Game continues efforts to minimize wolf depredations on livestock and address impacts of predation on elk populations. The 5-year post-delisting federal oversight period expired in May 2016 and Fish and Game is now developing a new management plan to guide wolf management for the next 10 years. Most federal funding support for wolf monitoring ceased in FY2015. Per state law, general funds, Fish and Game license revenue, and livestock assessment fees financially support actions to reduce wolf impacts on livestock and elk through the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board.

Participation in Hunting and Fishing — About one in two Idahoans have fished and one in three Idahoans have hunted in the last two years, yet many hunters and anglers do not purchase a license every year. Similarly, although Idaho enjoys one of the highest rates of participation in the country, the percentage of Idahoans who hunt and/or fish has declined as the state's population has increased. Recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters and anglers affect both the hunting and fishing heritage in Idaho as well as the revenue for the agency to fulfill its mission. Emphasis also is being placed on conveying the contributions and importance of hunting, fishing, and trapping to not only wildlife management but also to Idaho's culture and economy.

Nonresident Hunters — Nonresident hunting license sales over the past year have appeared to “bottom out” and shown marked improvement since the Great Recession, but still remain well below the peak of 2008. Contributing to this increase was high winter survival for deer and elk and the discount on nonresident 2nd deer and elk tags for the fall of 2014 and 2015. The significantly higher cost for nonresidents to hunt in Idaho not only helps keep costs low for residents, but also accounts for more than half of all license revenue. Therefore, a small increase or decrease in nonresident tag sales has a measurable impact on total license revenue. To continue this trend in tag sales, Fish and Game continues to monitor and refine its mailings and marketing techniques in the print and electronic media.

Managing Predation — Fish and Game is taking overt actions to manage predation when it impairs reaching fish and wildlife population objectives. The challenge is to define and find a balance between predators and prey—which is technically difficult, especially when overlaid with legal, policy, or administrative guidelines and recognition that predator and prey may both be important game or at-risk species. Examples include reducing wolf predation on elk to increase elk survival and reducing American white pelican predation on Yellowstone cutthroat trout along the Blackfoot River to improve spawning success. Defining “balance” also includes stakeholders’ opinions, which takes time and money to properly assess.

Private Lands and Wildlife — While only 31% of Idaho is in private ownership, the location of this land and its associated habitat is critical to the continuation of many of our wildlife populations. Most of Idaho's non-urban private land is in agricultural production, either row crop agriculture, livestock grazing or non-industrial forest lands. This land is usually located in highly productive valley bottoms with access to water. The factors that make this land attractive to farmers and ranchers also make this land desirable to wildlife. This interaction between Idaho's wildlife populations and landowners presents Fish and Game with both opportunities and challenges. Most landowners enjoy having wildlife on their property and many work with Fish and Game to conduct habitat projects to improve populations and recreational opportunities. However, the presence of large numbers of wildlife, especially big game, have the potential to cause damage to agricultural products or infrastructure and can lead to conflict. In these cases, Fish and Game is working with sportsmen and landowners through various programs to alleviate or reduce the impacts from wildlife. Developing new technical and policy tools as well as allocating financial resources is a focus.

Funding — More than 90 percent of Idahoans say wildlife issues are important to them, yet Fish and Game receives no general tax revenue. Instead, the agency's revenue is almost entirely composed of license sales, excise taxes from hunting and fishing

The Landscape 2017: Strategic Issues

equipment, mitigation funding, and grants. As a result of multiple years of lower license revenue, during the 2015 Legislative Session Fish and Game strategically reduced its license appropriation to better align its current and future budgets with forecasted revenue. After this alignment, the agency successfully restored a portion of its license budget for 2017 due to the improvement in license revenue. However, even with license revenue now on a positive trend, Fish and Game continues to struggle with the loss of purchasing power due to inflation and increased personnel costs. In addition, the tax check-off for wildlife and the wildlife specialty license plates are insufficient to fund the wildlife diversity program. In short, Fish and Game's funding is unable to meet the public's expectations.

State Sovereignty — Fish and Game's statutory mission emphasizes that wildlife are managed in trust for the citizens of Idaho. State sovereignty to manage Idaho's wildlife is critical to upholding the public trust and to uphold Article I, Section 23 of the Idaho Constitution which states that the rights to hunt, fish and trap, including by the use of traditional methods, are a valued part of the heritage of the State of Idaho and shall forever be preserved for the people and managed through the laws, rules and proclamations that preserve the future of hunting, fishing and trapping and provides that public hunting, fishing and trapping of wildlife shall be a preferred means of managing wildlife.

Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan — The Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan provides a framework for conserving "species of greatest conservation need" and the habitats upon which they depend. It is the state's guiding document for managing and conserving at-risk species. An integrated approach to implementing this strategy across all Fish and Game programs will help to preclude listings under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and uphold state authority for managing its wildlife. Fish and Game completed the plan in February 2016, which is currently under review by the US Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Review Team.

Workforce — Fish and Game is experiencing an increase in retirements as Baby Boomers reach retirement age and is committed to workforce planning and employee development to bridge forecasted gaps. Compensation, compression, and movement to market pay averages will continue to be challenges within the confines of the state compensation system. Market-driven pay pressures of some high demand and/or critical positions will require flexibility and creativity in attracting and retaining a high qualified workforce to meet department goals.



GOAL

Fish, Wildlife & Habitat

Sustain Idaho's fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend.

OBJECTIVE

Maintain or improve game populations to meet the demand for hunting, fishing and trapping.

Ensure the long-term survival of native fish, wildlife and plants.

Increase the capacity of habitat to support fish and wildlife.

Eliminate the impacts of fish and wildlife diseases on fish and wildlife populations, livestock, and humans.

STRATEGIES

- ▶ Develop and implement fish and wildlife management plans.
- ▶ Improve the scientific basis and public involvement process used to set harvest rules and regulations to achieve long-term sustainability of populations and habitat.
- ▶ Manage predation to ensure continued supplies of fish and wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.
- ▶ Identify and monitor native species with high priority conservation needs.
- ▶ Develop and implement management plans for conservation of high priority species to ensure survival and avoid new Endangered Species Act listings.
- ▶ Collaborate with interested and affected parties to recover threatened and endangered species.
- ▶ Provide incentives and assistance to landowners to improve habitat on private land.
- ▶ Work with sportsman's groups and other conservation partners to improve important habitats.
- ▶ Work with public land managers to achieve large-scale habitat improvements.
- ▶ Fully obtain and implement mitigation for habitat affected by infrastructure and development projects.
- ▶ Reduce or eliminate the risk of transmission of disease between captive and free-ranging fish and wildlife.
- ▶ Collaborate with other agencies and education institutions on disease control, prevention and research.

KEY SERVICES PROVIDED FY 2012-2015

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Provide harvestable surplus of deer and elk (<i># of deer and elk harvested</i>). ^c	66,062	65,780	81,936	NA ^c
Scientifically assess the abundance and health of big game populations to inform management decisions (<i># of hours of deer and elk aerial surveys flown</i>)	427	719	741	1,190
Alleviate wildlife damage to agriculture (<i>minimum # of depredation complaints responded to</i>)	737	903	666	525
Compensate for wildlife damage to agriculture (<i># depredation claims paid</i>)	22	25	23	23
Improve opportunity to harvest game fish (<i># of Department-operated hatchery-raised resident and anadromous fish stocked in ponds, lakes, and streams</i>)	23,007,356	23,837,326	35,253,197	30,774,342
Scientifically assess the abundance and health of fish populations to inform management decisions (<i># surveys conducted on lakes, reservoirs, rivers, and streams</i>)	1,297 ^c	464	962	868
Enforce fish and game laws (<i># of warnings and citations issued</i>)	4,175	3,480	4,868	4,348
Protect game populations, provide information, ensure human safety (<i># of licenses checked by officers in the field</i>)	65,684	60,653	62,553	65,521
Provide information, analysis, and recommendations to improve fish and wildlife habitats and reduce impacts from land and water use (<i>minimum # technical comments, reviews, meetings, site visits, and technical data requests filled</i>)	2,438 ^a	2,296 ^a	3,287	2,727
Minimize the impacts of fish and wildlife diseases on fish and wildlife populations, livestock, and humans (<i># cases, biological samples, and necropsies handled by health labs</i>)	2,825	2,924	3,274	3,535
Provide information to license buyers to increase their recreation satisfaction and opportunities (<i># visitors to Idaho Hunt Planner and Fish Planner web pages</i>)	174,483	264,962	287,145	268,375
Provide for community and public involvement in management and education while reducing costs (<i># Volunteer, Reservist, and Hunter Ed Instructor hours</i>) ^b	74,848	68,986	63,673 ^a	52,768 ^a

a - Tally is incomplete

b - Measure combines fiscal and calendar years

c - Measure based on calendar year

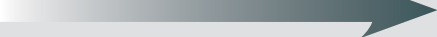

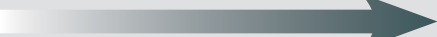


FY 2017-2020 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2016-2019 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2016 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2017-2020 Management Direction
Emphasize elk restoration particularly in the Panhandle, Selway, Lolo, Middle Fork, Sawtooth, and Salmon zones.	Continued collaboration and partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and others to improve elk habitat across the state. Continued to work with the Clearwater Basin Collaborative to assess habitat quality, physical condition of elk, elk survival, and population performance. Population monitoring has been improved by expanding efforts to monitor elk survival and cause-specific mortality by using GPS (global positioning system) radio-collars on both cow and calf elk in eight study areas around the state.	Emphasize elk restoration, particularly in the Panhandle, Lolo, Selway, Middle Fork, and Sawtooth elk management zones.
Align predation management with elk restoration.	The Fish and Game Commission adopted predation management plans for the Panhandle, Lolo and Selway, Middle Fork, and Sawtooth elk management zones. Predation management activities are being implemented in these elk zones that are below elk population objectives.	Align predation management with elk restoration.
Manage wolves to maintain state management; work with the Wolf Depredation Control Board to manage depredation and meet the \$110,000 match requirement.	Continued intensive wolf population monitoring activities, including documentation of wolf numbers, distribution and reproduction of wolf packs, harvest, and other wolf mortality throughout the state. The 5-year post-delisting federal oversight expired in May 2016. Wolf populations remain well-above all criteria required in the 2009 federal delisting rule. Fish and Game contributed \$110,000 to the Idaho Wolf Depredation Control Board, matching the contribution of the Department of Agriculture.	Manage wolves like other big game species at levels compatible with prey-species objectives. Work with the Wolf Depredation Control Board to direct control actions to address wolf depredation conflicts with livestock and excessive impacts of wolf predation on ungulate populations.
Support state actions that preclude sage-grouse listing.	Fish and Game provided technical assistance to the Governor's Office, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, and Natural Resources Conservation Service on their management plans for sage-grouse conservation. Fish and Game also provided technical and financial assistance for sage-grouse conservation projects on state, private, and federal lands.	Fish and Game will provide technical assistance to the federal and state land management agencies implementing their sage-grouse conservation plans and will also provide technical and financial assistance to implement sage-grouse conservation measures on private, state, and federal lands.
Finalize the Bull Trout recovery planning process and pursue delisting in appropriate recovery units.	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a final Bull Trout Recovery Plan in September 2015 that encompasses the entire contiguous distribution. Despite considerable input from Fish and Game staff and Office of Species Conservation, including documentation that most Idaho populations are stable or increasing with few or no substantive threats, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that recovery is likely to take (at best) another 25 years.	With policy leadership from Office of Species Conservation, work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to investigate the feasibility of splitting the contiguous distribution into several "Distinct Population Segments" to facilitate delisting at the smaller recovery unit scale.
Ensure an efficient and effective fish hatchery program and build to full operating capacity.	Statewide evaluation of stocked trout by fisheries research staff continued for a fourth year; hatcheries completed a transition to stocking larger trout into large lakes and reservoirs where an increased proportion of these fish will be caught and harvested by anglers. A strategic plan for reinvestment in hatchery infrastructure was developed for the statewide trout and kokanee production program. Renovation and replacement projects over the next four years will focus on repair and modernization of obsolete and mission critical structures in order to secure and maximize production capacity. An increased number of Chinook Salmon smolts were released by the Clearwater Fish Hatchery after minor modifications to four ponds provided additional rearing volume. The increased production level is targeted again for 2016 smolt releases.	Ensure an efficient and effective fish hatchery program and build to full operating capacity.
Accomplish Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout conservation and management, including using an adaptive management approach to address conflicts between Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and pelicans.	Under depredation permit authority from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fish and Game used a variety of techniques to reduce pelican-trout conflicts at Blackfoot Reservoir and the Blackfoot River. Emphasis was on managing pelican abundance at the nesting colony and intensive hazing on the river. Using a combination of hazing and nest destruction, the breeding colony was restricted to the management objective of 350 nests.	Manage avian predation where it affects native fish conservation and/or sport fish management objectives.

FY 2016-2019 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2016 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2017-2020 Management Direction
Implement the southern Idaho wildlife mitigation settlement to reach target acres, and create "stewardship accounts" within the State Endowment Fund that will fund operations and maintenance.	The first 760 acres of wildlife habitat were acquired under the Southern Idaho Wildlife Mitigation (SIWM) agreement in 2015. The capital cost was a 50:50 cost share between Bonneville Power Administration and Bear River/PacificCorp mitigation. As of March 2016, the SIWM stewardship account stood at \$15,964,896. Of that total, \$1,400,000 was added for stewardship of the new 760-acre Walker parcel. Another 260-acre acquisition is proposed to be acquired under the SIWM agreement in 2016 and will be added to the 760 acres of credit up closing and as contribution towards the target 8,588 acres required under the agreement.	Implement the southern Idaho wildlife mitigation settlement to reach target acres, and create "stewardship accounts" within the State Endowment Fund that will fund operations and maintenance.
Integrate State Wildlife Action Plan implementation across Fish and Game programs.	The revision of the Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) was completed in February 2016 and is currently under review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Review Team. Concurrent with this review, we are actively working with staff across programs to incorporate SWAP priorities into annual work plans.	Integrate State Wildlife Action Plan implementation across Fish and Game programs.
Improve populations and resiliency of native fish by partnering with governmental agencies, landowners, and private entities to provide fish passage facilities.	Idaho Fish and Game engaged with various partners and private landowners around the state to restore connectivity, ensure downstream passage for anadromous smolts, and enhance habitat to benefit native fishes. Examples include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifying fish passage conditions at Harris Springs Creek in southeast Idaho; Planning to install culvert baffles and working with Latah County to replace fish barrier culverts in the Potlatch River drainage in northern Idaho; Planning for replacement of a barrier culvert with a bridge in the Lemhi River Basin. The Salmon Region fish screen program maintained over 260 screens on irrigation diversions which reduced entrainment of juvenile salmon and steelhead.	Improve populations and resiliency of native fish by partnering with governmental agencies, landowners, and private entities to enhance habitat and provide fish passage facilities.
Increase efficiency and effectiveness of conservation law enforcement by increasing the public's awareness of the effects of unlawful harvest, improving detection rates, and implementing recommendations from the 2012 study.	Key leaders and researchers met twice to discuss possible scientific methods to determine unlawful harvest. This is a very difficult metric to capture. Some possibilities were raised but we did not reach a definite course of action. In an effort to tell our story we published a new story each month highlighting an enforcement case. Five of seven regions now have Facebook pages that have greatly increased exposure about our day-to-day efforts.	Formalize an effort to gather information to inform the public of the effects of unlawful harvest.

FY 2015-2020 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Benchmark
1. Compliance with regulations (# of violations / # of licenses checked)	4348 / 65,521 (7.2% / 10.9%)						Less than 10% of licenses checked result in violation / check 15% of total licenses sold
2. Elk and deer populations are meeting objectives (% zones and units meeting objectives)	83%						90%
3. Opportunity to harvest game fish (# of Department-operated hatchery-raised resident and anadromous fish stocked in ponds, lakes, and streams)	30,774,342						23,900,000

Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

- The benchmark is based on past performance by Department officers.
- The metric is based on cow elk in elk zones; % 4-point mule deer bucks in mule deer data analysis unit; % 5 point whitetail bucks in whitetail data analysis unit. The benchmark is a 5-year target to meet objectives laid out in big game species plans. Objectives in the plans are based on historical biological data as well as the social requests for various hunting experiences. Many external factors, such as wildfire and weather, affect the Department's ability to achieve objectives.
- The benchmark is based on maintaining the FY2013 level of production.

GOAL

Fish and Wildlife Recreation

Meet the demand for hunting, fishing, trapping and other wildlife recreation.

OBJECTIVE

Maintain a diversity of fishing, hunting, and trapping opportunities.

Sustain fish and wildlife recreation on public lands.

Increase the variety and distribution of access to private land for fish and wildlife recreation.

Increase opportunities for wildlife viewing and appreciation.

STRATEGIES

- ▶ Provide opportunities specific to the needs of beginners, youth, people with disabilities, and families.
- ▶ Assess participation, demand and satisfaction with hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities. Adjust management to achieve objectives.
- ▶ Provide diverse hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities to meet the desires for a wide variety of user groups.

- ▶ Protect the public's right to use public lands and waters for hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.
- ▶ Work with landowners to obtain public access across private lands to public lands.

- ▶ Provide incentives and services to landowners who allow public access for hunting, fishing and trapping.
- ▶ Improve landowner/sportsmen cooperation through communication and enforcement of hunting, fishing and trapping rules.

- ▶ Promote and publicize wildlife appreciation opportunities.
- ▶ Partner with other agencies, local communities and others to develop wildlife appreciation facilities, opportunities and materials on other land ownerships.

OBJECTIVE

Maintain broad public support for hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing.

STRATEGIES

- ▶ Emphasize ethics, safety and fair chase in hunting, fishing and trapping through Fish and Game education and enforcement programs.
- ▶ Publicize the economic and social benefits of hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing.
- ▶ Expand opportunities to take hunter and trapper education classes.
- ▶ Promote hunting, fishing and trapping as important tools for conserving and managing Idaho's fish and wildlife.
- ▶ Emphasize the role of the sportsman conservationist in funding wildlife conservation and management in Idaho.
- ▶ Use research and marketing to maintain and increase participation in hunting, fishing and trapping.

KEY SERVICES PROVIDED FY 2012-2015

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Provide opportunity to harvest game fish and wildlife (<i># of hunting, fishing, and combination licenses sold</i>)	573,714	566,460	576,063	600,328
Provide public access to private lands or through private lands to public lands for hunting, fishing, and trapping (<i>acres provided through Access Yes! program</i>)	924,080	882,976	1,043,432	887,643
Provide public access to important wildlife areas for hunting, fishing, trapping, and viewing (<i># of acres managed</i>)	380,000	388,000	390,000	395,000
Provide opportunity to hunt big game (<i># elk and deer hunter days</i>) ^b	1,258,684	1,344,219	1,456,170	NA ^a
Provide opportunity to harvest salmon and steelhead without harming threatened populations (<i>angler hours spent fishing for salmon and steelhead</i>)	1,928,916	1,540,969	1,727,555	1,163,499
Provide public access to fishing waters (<i># fishing and boating access sites maintained</i>)	330	328	329	336
Educate students about hunting and firearms safety, ethics and responsibilities, wildlife management, and fish and game rules and regulations (<i># of students Hunter Education certified</i>)	8,703 ^a	9,449	10,195	10,615 ^a

a - Tally is incomplete

b - Measure based on a calendar year



FY 2017-2020 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2016-2019 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2016 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2017-2020 Management Direction
Implement priority activities identified within the Wildlife Management Area Plans with a focus on reducing long-term operation and maintenance costs.	Habitat staff is in the process of developing long-term budgets and implementing priority activities. As part of that process, infrastructure that is not essential to Wildlife Management Area operations was identified.	Will begin disposing of non-essential infrastructure. Will evaluate Wildlife Management Area priorities and costs/benefits. Redirect resources as appropriate.
Make it easier to go hunting and fishing, including streamlining purchasing, improving licensing options for special populations, and other customer service improvements.	Fish and Game is partnering with its license system vendor to send reminder emails to sportsmen to renew their fishing license and/or participate in a controlled hunt drawing based on their past purchase behavior. Based on email analytics, the reminders are well-received and the return-on-investment is high. Both the Fishing Planner and Hunt Planner (interactive tools on the Fish and Game website) were redesigned and upgraded to better help people figure out <i>where</i> to go hunting and fishing.	Make it easier to go hunting and fishing, including streamlining purchasing, improving licensing options for special populations, and other customer service improvements.
Make areas for hunting, fishing, and trapping more accessible and convenient, with particular emphasis on developing partnerships	Maintained and improved Wildlife Management Area roads, parking areas, and trails for hunting, fishing, and trapping accessibility. Provided a wheelchair accessible hunting blind on Sterling Wildlife Management Area in southeastern Idaho. Access to 300,000 acres of private lands was provided through the Access Yes! Program. Fish and Game partnered with The Nature Conservancy of Idaho to increase access on Silver Creek for anglers.	Improve access to elk hunting in the Clearwater Region by providing financial assistance to the Clearwater Forest to improve neglected trails. Access Yes! will partner with private landowners to provide access on private lands and to access-limited public lands. Improve or promote hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities on Wildlife Management Areas.
Streamline processes to make it easier to take hunter and bowhunter education courses.	The bowhunter education program implemented a complete online course to allow students to certify anytime that meets their schedule. The program implemented a new student registration system that makes finding, registering and tracking courses simple for students and for internal reporting purposes. The hunter education program hired temporary staff to teach courses where more classes were needed to meet student demand.	Analyze student registrations to determine where demand is needed, and subsequently create and implement a plan to meet those needs.
		NEW Promote Access Yes! and seek out new participants and partners in public access.
		NEW Develop and implement management-based fishery research projects to enhance the ability to conserve native fish populations and meet sport fish management objectives.
		NEW Initiate mandatory trapping education.

FY 2015-2020 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Benchmark
4. Landowners allow access for fish & wildlife recreation (# of properties enrolled / # private acres in Access Yes! Program)	92 / 385,028						90 / 350,000

Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

4. The benchmark is based on past success of the Access Yes! program, and the cost per acre.

GOAL

Working with Others

Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management.

OBJECTIVE

Improve citizen involvement in the decision-making process.

Increase public knowledge and understanding of Idaho's fish and wildlife.

STRATEGIES

- ▶ Ensure that interested and affected stakeholders are notified of opportunities to participate in decisions and that all voices are heard.
 - ▶ Improve variety and convenience of opportunities for citizens to be involved in Fish and Game decisions.
 - ▶ Utilize new information technologies, such as social media and other web-based platforms to broaden participation in proposal development and agency decision-making.
 - ▶ Utilize opinion surveys to sample a cross-section of sportsmen and women.
-
- ▶ Provide biological information on Idaho's fish and wildlife to convey the status of populations and the basis for management decisions.
 - ▶ Expand utilization of new information technologies to improve public outreach.
 - ▶ Provide timely and accurate information on recreational opportunities, management actions and important news related to fish and wildlife an hunting, fishing, trapping, and viewing opportunities.



KEY SERVICES PROVIDED FY 2012-2015

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Provide information on fishing and hunting, fish and wildlife, educational programs, volunteer opportunities, and other general agency information to the public (<i>average # visitors per month to agency website</i>)	208,525	255,913	301,429 ^c	332,863
Train school teachers about how to improve their students' awareness, knowledge, skills, and responsible behavior related to Idaho's fish and wildlife. (<i># teachers who attended Project Wild workshops</i>)	425	654	390	396
Provide information to license buyers to increase their recreation satisfaction and opportunities (<i># visitors to Idaho Hunt Planner and Fish Planner web pages</i>)	174,483	264,962	287,145	268,375
Provide for community and public involvement in management and education while reducing costs (<i># Volunteer, Reservist, and Hunter Ed Instructor hours</i>) ^b	74,848	68,986	63,673 ^a	52,768 ^a

a - Tally is incomplete

b - Measure combines fiscal and calendar years

c - These cases are better reported as average # of visits compared to average # of visitors; FY14 was changed to reflect a previous inconsistency.

FY 2017-2020 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2016-2019 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2016 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2017-2020 Management Direction
Strengthen citizen engagement in wildlife conservation and management and use existing programs such as Master Naturalist, Project Wild, and volunteers to keep citizens engaged.	Over seven hundred Master Naturalists—in eight chapters across the state—donated 20,505 hours as volunteers.	Strengthen citizen engagement in wildlife conservation and management and use existing programs such as Master Naturalist, Project Wild, and volunteers to keep citizens engaged.
Build capacity and use the “create once, publish everywhere” approach for more effective communications, both internally and externally.	The Fish and Game website is in transition to a system that will allow regional staff to post events, information, and stories that are locally relevant. Once the site is fully transitioned, staff can focus more on creating useful content such as how-to videos and more time-sensitive information.	Build capacity and use the “create once, publish everywhere” approach for more effective communications, both internally and externally.
Further disseminate information about the economic benefits of wildlife-based recreation to help citizens better understand the positive effect that hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing has on Idaho's overall economy.	Produced and disseminated a video statewide demonstrating the positive economic effect of hunting, fishing and trapping, particularly in rural Idaho. Shared information with business leaders during meetings in all seven regions and passed out stickers stating “Hunting and Fishing Means Business.”	Continue to expand awareness of the important role that hunting, fishing, trapping and viewing plays in Idaho's overall economy.
Increase awareness of the resources necessary to manage Idaho's fish and wildlife.	For the first time in seven years, Idaho Fish and Game was successful in increasing its license budget to address targeted needs for the FY16 and FY17 request. This increase of under \$750,000 (0.7% of the total FY17 budget) is a good, first step to restore lost purchasing power due to inflation for resident hatchery fish production and game management.	Increase awareness of the resources necessary to manage Idaho's fish and wildlife.
Emphasize educating Idahoans about the important role hunters, anglers, and trappers have played in wildlife conservation and management for over 100 years.	Created the “Faces of Conservation” initiative at the MK Nature Center highlighting Idaho hunters and anglers – along with signs and other interpretive materials – explaining the history of wildlife conservation and the important role hunting, fishing and trapping plays in funding wildlife conservation. These materials will be updated regularly at the MK Nature Center over the next three years. In addition, these materials will be reproduced and used at other Fish and Game facilities throughout the state.	Emphasize educating Idahoans about the important role hunters, anglers, and trappers have played in wildlife conservation and management for over 100 years.
		NEW Increase public knowledge of unlawful activity in relation to fish and wildlife and fishing and hunting. Promote Citizens Against Poaching as a way to help and get involved.

NEW Reorganization of MK Nature Center staff and duties will allow for continued development of educational outreach materials and programs aligned with Fish and Game Commission & agency priorities and goals to be used throughout the state.

NEW Further develop and utilize social media platforms to distribute information, answer questions, support rulemaking and season-setting, and drive interest to the new Fish and Game website.

FY 2015-2020 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Benchmark
5. Effectively convey and distribute information about wildlife and wildlife-based recreation (<i># of unique visitors per year to Fish and Game website</i>)	1.77 million						2.00 million

Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

5. The benchmark is based on expected growth in web traffic.



GOAL

Management Support

Enhance the capability of the Department to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public.

OBJECTIVE

Attract and retain a diverse and professional workforce.

Provide programs, equipment and facilities for excellent customer service and management effectiveness.

Improve information management and business systems.

STRATEGIES



- ▶ Seek competitive salaries for Fish and Game employees.
- ▶ Provide training and professional development opportunities.
- ▶ Reward leadership, integrity, competency, professionalism and innovation.
- ▶ Use the fleet management program to efficiently acquire and manage Fish and Game vehicles and field equipment.
- ▶ Promote and strengthen volunteer programs to assist with habitat and fish and wildlife management and education.
- ▶ Work closely with license vendors to ensure accurate delivery of licenses and tags.
- ▶ Provide facilities that foster effective customer service and productive work environments.
- ▶ Develop data management system to make Fish and Game data more readily usable and available to the public, other agencies and employees.
- ▶ Implement an electronic licensing system that is reliable, adaptable, user friendly and cost effective.



FY 2017-2020 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

FY 2016-2019 Management Direction	Brief statement of FY 2016 status/progress/accomplishment	FY 2017-2020 Management Direction
Increase efficiency and effectiveness of conservation law enforcement by improving officer training. <i>See also Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Goal.</i>	Replaced seven mobile radios in our continued effort to achieve interoperability and continued efforts to comply with the Governor's Executive order.	Increase public outreach and community involvement at the local level to keep citizens informed of opportunities to engage and participate.
Continue marketing strategies to maintain growth in nonresident hunting license and tag sales.	The Fish and Game Commission again approved the discounting of 2nd non-resident deer and elk tags to spur sales with minor adjustments. The discount period for these tags was offered during the month of August 2015 only, with 2nd deer tags at \$199 and 2nd elk at \$350. Due to robust game populations and minimal wildfire activity, almost the entire non-resident deer tag allocation was sold out; non-resident elk tags also sold very well. Over two-thirds of the offered 2nd tags were sold to Idaho residents to increase their opportunity, and the 2nd deer and elk tag sales increased by \$269,000 over the 2014 season.	Continue marketing strategies to maintain growth in nonresident hunting license and tag sales.
Seek the Price Lock/revenue increase proposal during the 2016 legislative session.	This proposal did not advance in the 2016 Legislature.	Continue public and legislative engagement about funding the agency.
Continue marketing strategies to pursue the Price Lock to re-engage lapsed anglers and hunters; specifically emphasize how purchasing licenses helps Fish and Game make sure fish and wildlife are there the next time they go afield.	Fish and Game worked with four MBA students from Boise State University to develop strategies to grow license revenue. Specifically, their recommendations were focused on reducing churn among license-buyers, utilizing the Commission's discount authority, shifting sales to the first quarter, engaging the Millennials, and improving overall conservation awareness. Their recommendations are being considered for FY 2017 implementation. Fish and Game is working with its license system vendor to send emails to targeted segments of license-buyers to remind them of upcoming deadlines and encouraging them to go hunting and fishing. Results and analytics indicate a high return-on-investment. While a baseline gets established, efforts to improve conversions will include better segmenting of different kinds of hunters and anglers, improving the emails themselves, and expanding the percentage of license-buyers who provide their email.	Continue marketing strategies to engage lapsed anglers and hunters; specifically emphasize how purchasing licenses helps Fish and Game make sure fish and wildlife are there the next time they go afield.
Continue to work with legislators and citizens and emphasize communications about the programs and services that benefit the broad spectrum of Idahoans, including the importance of hunting, fishing, and trapping.	Used negotiated rule-making process to work with the trapping community to develop proposed rules for a mandatory trapper education program. The Idaho Legislature passed legislation giving Fish and Game explicit authority to require mandatory trapper education.	Will continue to work with Idaho trappers to develop/refine proposed trapper education rules for consideration by the legislature during the 2017 legislative session, for implementation in FY 2018
Secure additional Southwest Region office space when agency resources are available.	During the 2016 legislative session, Idaho Fish and Game requested and received \$100,000 per year in appropriation to secure a land parcel along the I-84 corridor between Nampa and Meridian using a capital lease. This appropriation is for FY17 and beyond, and Fish and Game is working with the Department of Administration to follow the necessary steps to begin the process to identify the property and move forward. When revenues are sufficient in the future, Fish and Game will pursue the next step of building a facility on the site to replace the existing office.	Acquire appropriate resources to support Southwest regional staff and public services.
Improve efforts - including evaluation of existing efforts and initiation of new ones - that recruit new participants, retain current ones, and reactive those who have dropped out.	Staff tested the effectiveness of e-mail and post-card reminders to hunters who had churned in the past 5 years to assess whether one or both methods would increase license and tag purchase activity. Results suggested some response from the e-mail group, but not enough to be conclusive. An evaluation of existing recruitment efforts to assess cost effectiveness is in process. For many efforts, evaluation metrics and baselines need to be established	Improve efforts—including evaluation of existing efforts and initiation of new ones - that recruit new participants, retain current ones, and reactive those who have dropped out.
		NEW Develop and launch a new Fish and Game website that will contain more regional-specific and interactive information for the public.

FY 2015-2020 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Benchmark
6. Attract and retain highly qualified personnel (% successful registers / % retention of hired FTEs after 2 years employment)	100 / 81						94 / 88
7. All that pay benefit, all that benefit pay (% of funding that comes from the general Idaho public)	2.3%						3%

Performance Measure Explanatory Notes:

6. A "successful register" is defined as one with at least 5 qualified applicants. The percent of successful registers was determined by the formula **[(# successful registers + total open competitive registers) * 100]**. The benchmark is based on the average over the past four fiscal years.

7. "Funding from the general public" is defined as revenue from the sales of wildlife license plates, the non-game tax check-off, donations to the Department, and interest income. The percent of funding from the general public was calculated by the formula **[funding from general public + (funding from general public + license sales)] * 100**. The benchmark reflects a goal of increasing this revenue by \$675,000 from FY 2015.





Our Mission

(Idaho Code Section 36-103)

All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.

Idaho Fish and Game adheres to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, disability or veteran's status. If you feel you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility of Idaho Fish and Game, or if you desire further information, please write to: Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID 83707 or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, Mailstop: MBSP-4020, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203 Telephone: (703) 358-2156. All photos © IDFG

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